

July 2004

Old School Gaming



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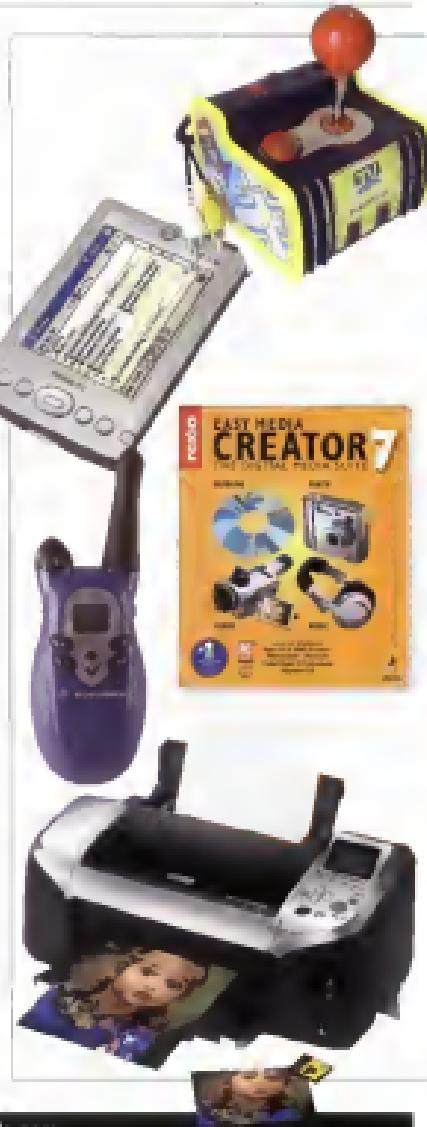
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HUB Shopping Guide

Following page 12 (in selected markets)

www.hubcnmedia.com



Andrew Moore Craven

Editorial

Last month we asked you whether you take gadgets with you on vacation or if you prefer to unplug. I happen to'd only natural that as readers of HUB Digital Living, you subscribe to something of a digital lifestyle the ever evolving nature of your letters told that to anyone is no surprise.

The answer much for the future will be one where technology would take over doing all the manual work both at home and on the road we should be riding around in flying cars, being waded to hand and foot leg robot butlers, and doing all of our shopping — grocery and otherwise — using vending machines, according to some past predictions. More recent (though still dated) predictions say that we should be getting everything we need from the Internet and someone getting us in the process.

Tech is designed to make our lives easier and simpler. Whether it has succeeded is seen as a matter for debate. Many of us can't even imagine being productive without a computer or the assorted gadgets and gear that keep us in touch on the move. Considering the use of gadgets from work to vacation is logical. Why not even reserve of paper maps when planning or taking a vacation when the name [and often more] does not available online, in software packages and even in the palm of your hand and so available to boot? And a GPS system and it's a little bit you'll bring on touch on a family road trip.

Why not keep in touch with the office using a cell phone and Wi-Fi Internet connection while on vacation? Forget that last point. Happy vacationing.
— Andrew Moore Craven, Editor

Meng Louie writes: The term "gadgets" covers a lot of territory. What I bring along on vacation depends on the gadget. I definitely don't bring along anything that would "plug" me into the office/home environment such as laptop, cell phone/voicemail pages. However, other gadgets are indispensable. Frank Longwells would like to unplug. There's nothing scheduled for gadgets on my vacation. Ideally, vacation is the reason longer everything of modern society.

Myron Iskowitch writes: My first thought upon reading this month's topic was "of course I take my technology with me on vacation. It's because of that stuff that I can go on vacation!"

With my cell phone, laptop, and Internet connection, I'm just as close to New York, London, and Paris from my cottage as I am from the office.

Reader: Leigh writes: I got my first laptop computer about four years ago. On a trip to the U.S., I found it invaluable. I had a steady tool on hand to do accurate travel planning, with the installed version of Microsoft Streets and Trips to assist in the production of each leg travel directions. It was also useful for the kids, as I had brought a supply of movies that could be played on [the laptop] in the back of the car.

Letter of the Month

The winner of this month's letter contest is Leslie Becken.

Once upon a time I used to throw a change of clothing, a hunting knife, a compass, a few cans of beans, and a fishing pole in a backpack, strap it onto the roof of my car, and take off for the North Country for a few days. That constituted a good holiday. Things have changed. Unplugged you say? In today's world?

Today my crew has migrated onto an 81,000-tonne cruise ship and the beans have been replaced by granola bars and leftover Buffalo wings. Instead of a compass, I now sport a GPS receiver so I can check on the ship's position in the Caribbean Sea — also needing digital watch with dual time zones so I don't oversleep and miss the all-day beatitudes. It is a data march of course, because I need the phone numbers and email addresses of all my friends handy so that I can give them a daily report of my vacation. To that end, I have frequented the ashore cyber cafes so that I can delete all the spam from my email before I get home. Unplugged, you say? No way!

Perhaps subversively, Leslie won the Ultimate Dell Print Premier Give-Away from Dell Canada. There are still two more Dell Print Premier prizes to be won so keep those letters coming.

This month, in addition to feedback on the crisis, tell us whether you take your gadgets on vacation with you or if you prefer to unplug. Drop us a line at letters@hubcanada.com. To mark the one year anniversary of Dell Inc., a printer series, the company will release the Ultimate Dell Print Premier Give-Away, a Dell 4940 All-in-One Inkjet Printer, a high res printer, scanner, and PC, free colour copier and PC fax capability, ten extra ink cartridges [black and colour], a CD in USB 2.0 cable, and a pack of Dell Premium Inkjet paper for Dell-rich prints.



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Ultimate notebook meets virtual office

In our search for the perfect combination of size and performance, we came up with the X-Note series – notebooks that make no compromises. Starting with an Intel Centrino processor, we added one of the brightest LCD screens on the market, a 10-hour extended life battery* and a Quad Band wireless antenna, all packed into an ultra slim titanium and carbon fibre package that weighs a mere 2.4 kg.

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Intel Centrino is a trademark of Intel Corporation.
*Based on LG X-Note 1000.

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www.lg.com

If your love of surround sound is not shared by family members or close acquaintances, a new line of headphones from 3D Magic (www.3dmagic.com) may help you enjoy your audio and keep the peace. The line's debut product, the Sound Assault 5.1 Channel Surround Sound Headphones, comes with a power amplifier that acts as a central station, has eight independent speakers, and connects to a 5.1 enabled PC, home audio system, or DVD player. The headphones come bundled with the D3D and WinDsp software, the former for encoding Dolby 5.1 surround sound enabled

DTS-in-a-PC and the latter for converting standard stereo music into surround 5.1 channel surround sound.

The headphones sell for various amounts for each channel, but in best available effects, dual head phone options for multiple users, and supports DVD playback, ACD and DTS formats. The Sound Assault bundle is available now for \$199*.



*Converted from US dollars.

Sound Assault Headphones

Though Apple (www.apple.ca) has long helped Mac users cut the cord with its Airport networking devices, it has now extended the lead of wireless to PC users. The recently announced Airport Express is a compact, portable wireless base station that can plug directly into the wall for wireless Internet and data transfer, as well as streaming audio. The base station — which supports IEEE 802.11g and IEEE 802.11b standards — has analogue and digital audio outputs that can be connected to a stereo. The included AirTunes music networking software lets wirelessly stream iTunes audio files located on a wireless

enabled Macintosh or the PC that is within the network's range (45 m in ideal conditions) through the connected stereo system. Apple says multiple base stations can be bridged together to extend the wireless range. The Airport Express base station will be available in July (subject to Canadian regulatory approval) for \$129.



AirPort Express



Click Tracy Kara reported Microsoft Canada (www.microsoft.ca) has announced that its Smart Personal Objects Technology (SPOT) watches have finally made it over the border. The wristwatches from Paged and Soundwave feature a screen that scans the airwaves for information addressed to them. With a MSN Direct (www.msndirect.ca/en/) subscription, users personalize the information and services they want to receive including news, updates from CBC Radio

(Canada, ESPN, HGTV), and *The Wall Street Journal*, as well as MSN Meetings (messages and Microsoft Outlook calendar appointments reminders). The MSN Direct service is available in Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton, Guelph, London, Montreal, Ottawa, Buffalo City, Toronto, Vancouver, and Victoria. Prices for the watches, which are expected to be available through most major Canadian electronics retailers by press time, vary depending on make and model. The first month of MSN Direct service is free, after which subscribers have the choice of paying \$14.95 a month or \$199 for a full year.

MSN Direct SPOT watches

With speakers getting ever smaller and thinner, it was only a matter of time before they disappeared. That time has come with the development of Pursonic by German firm Puro. Pursonic (www.pursonic.com) is a 2 mm thick vibrating transducer that can be fitted into walls, floors, ceilings, sound generators or the reverse side of the soundboards' visage to create sound when they receive signals from a digital processor. Many standard theater speakers or surround sound systems have a "sweet spot," but Pursonic pursonic distributes audio more widely and evenly because the

entire angles of the vibrating surfaces are almost double the width of standard speakers. As well, the frequencies can be fine-tuned to the surface materials behind which the sound boards are concealed, whether its plaster, carpet, tile, or wood. While Pursonic is pitch-ing pursonic to home users, the technology does require custom installation.



pursonic

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FAMILY RADIOS

You may have seen families on trips to the mountains park or camp ground keeping in contact using a mobile talk-on walkie talkie.

Family Radio Service (FRS) is essentially a small Frequency Hopping Mode (from 462.625 MHz to 467.825 MHz) that can be used for family communication over the airwaves. FRS was the original radio service allowed in the U.S. and Canada for users to communicate over the airwaves without licensing fees or anything like that," says Sally Keenan, senior director of consumer product management for Cobra Electronics, a manufacturer with a healthy interest in FRS and other radios. FRS incorporates 24 channels in the frequency stack.

General mobile radio service (GMRS) is a newer standard in the same category as FRS and with the same basic feature set. While GMRS differs, however, in its frequency range and potential power, the higher the power [as Watts], the longer the potential range. The PRS standard limits radio to 0.5 Watts. "With 0.5 Watts of power, you maximum range is about 3 miles [4.8 km] in optimum conditions," Keenan says, "with GMRS you can actually go up to 5 miles."

The GMRS standard has yet to be approved for Canadian use, but is expected to be authorized in September. While the American Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has already approved the standard, license are required by law to buy a license to use it. Canadian regulations aren't expected to require a license, Keenan says.

GMRS allows seven channels with PRS and adds 13 of its own for a total of 22 channels. As an open frequency range, neither PRS nor GMRS are suitable for private conversation, despite the fact that many retailers (especially online retailers) sometimes refer to individual licensed codes within the large channel as scrambling or privacy codes. Privacy codes don't block other ears from hearing your conversation so much as they eliminate the noise and potential confusion of a number of people talking in the same channel. If, for example, you're communicating on channel 6 with code 04 activated, anyone listening to the same channel and code can hear your conversations. Similarly, anyone listening to channel 5 without any codes activated can hear all communications on that channel, regardless of whether codes are activated.

Following are some FRS/GMRS products we had a chance to test in the field.



The PRS45 is the least expensive in Cobras line at about \$30 for a two-pack. At a budget radio, the PRS45 sacrifices functionality in order to keep the price down. A tiny LCD shows which channel users are on and that's it. Without any form of light for the display and lacking significant rings, the visibility of the PRS45 radio is limited. A PRS45 "value pack" is now available on the Cobra Web site, which removes some of the functionality, comes with a desktop charger, illuminated display, printing codes, key pad lock, belt clip and

small case and a budget-conscious price tag make the PRS45 a tempting proposition for first time FRS buyers. However, no true FRS range and overall lack of features mean it won't be long before users start thinking about an upgrade.

Model: PRS45
Standard: PRS/GMRS
Price: \$49.99 (2 pack)
Range*: 3km (1.8 miles)

Pros:
 -Inexpensive
 -Simple operation
 -GMRS capability

Cons:
 -No features beyond talk
 -No privacy channel codes
 -Exaggerated range

Cobra Electronics



The PRS245 is the next step up in Cobras line and offers privacy codes (24 per channel), channel scanning, belt clip, key lock, rechargeable batteries and a range extender that, in effect, turns off auto-repeat to allow weak transmissions to come through if purchased as a pair. The PRS245 comes with a slide-by slide desk top cradle charger.

Relative to other radios tested, the plastic casing of the PRS245 feels too thin and the radio as a whole doesn't feel terribly robust, making it less suited to outdoor applications like camping and hiking and perhaps better suited to amusement parks and the like. The PRS245 is fairly well featured and as an added bonus, its options are fairly easy to understand without reading the manual.

Model: PRS245
Standard: GMRS/FRS
Price: \$79.99 (2 pack with charger)
Range*: 10 km (6.2 miles)

Pros:
 -Well featured
 -Well priced
 -Rechargeable batteries

Cons:
 -Casing feels flimsy
 -Exaggerated range

With a fairly rugged design, rechargeable battery, a drop-in/drop-out charger, quick release belt clip, and solid design, the TS400 was among the most functional of the radios tested despite the fact that it is FRS only, which limits the radio to 8 channels.

A top mounted volume control knob is a practical addition, allowing the volume to be adjusted while the user is still attached to the belt clip.

Unfortunately, the radio is lacking in range, the package states a maximum range of 3.2 km. That said, Motorola's range test rates seem to be more realistic than other radios tested, though our range tests were all in a city environment.

Motorola

Adding weather alerts, extra channels (owing far to GMRS standard), vibrating call alerts and a very rugged weather proof design, the TS500 is the best of the radios tested, though the added functionality comes at a price.

A rubberized case and very sturdy design mean the radio can stand up to a lot of punishment; it not only stood up to the drop test, but the newly conceived lean test, something I wouldn't even consider trying on the other radios tested.

The TS500's range (as stated by Motorola) is 8 km in open-air conditions.

That said, it has the simplest to operate: turning in a channel, adjusting the volume, and choosing a person/group profile and won't require users read the manual; however, other functions aren't as easy to access and will require some studying on the internet.

Perhaps the biggest problem with the TS500 is its belt clip design. The radios released by pushing a large button on the top of the clip. Removing it is easy enough, but trying to get the L-shaped clasp to hook back up with the catch requires a lot of fumbling.

Audionvox

The Audionvox GMRS8000 is not well suited to outdoor applications owing to its delicate casing, large and flimsy battery cover and the fact that it isn't weatherproofed. Its belt clip is by far the most practical of the lot as tested, using a metal ring on the back of the radios side in to the top of the belt clip to lock in. Removing it is equally simple.

As a entry radio, the GMRS8000 could be a good choice given the included car bus microphone and hands-free voice activation functionality. However, the small and sometimes hard to find "talk" button (owing to the fact that a similar "answer" button is situated directly below "talk"), and what seems like a deliberate overdesign limit the radio's appeal.

The strikes against the GMRS8000 are remedied by the fact that it is a full featured radio with a relatively low price, incorporating latest hands free operation with voice activation, weather alerts, and the like.

By Andrew Moore-Crisp

Model: Motorola TS400
Standard: FRS/GMRS
Price: \$29.99 (2 pack with charger)
Range*: 3.2 km (2.0 miles)

Pros:
-Rugged
-Top-mounted volume control
-Currently available and legal to use in Canada

Cons:
-FRS standard limits available channels
-Limited range



Model: Motorola TS500
Standard: FRS/GMRS
Price: \$129.99 (2 pack with charger)
Range*: 8 km (5 miles)

Pros:
-Very robust
-Cool design
-Weather alerts

Cons:
-Expensive
-Bigger than most tested
-Extra functions hard to access



Model: GMRS8000
Standard: GMRS/GMRS
Price: \$89.99 (2 pack with charger)
Range*: 8.0 km (5.0 miles)

Pros:
-Included microphone/wireless
-Light weight
-LED flash light

Cons:
-Thin plastic casing
-No weatherproofing
-Overdesigned range



* From manufacturer specifications in optimum conditions.

Digital family tree



For the record

Following are the same basic questions a sol, often addressing an archive of your family history:

- Where and when did your ancestor live?
- When and where was he or she born or married?
- When did he or she die?
- When and where were children born?
- What were your ancestors' relationships to other people?
- Are there previous pieces of research?

Bauer © Creative Projects

Tech tools help genealogists present family stories in new ways!

Researching your roots is a perfect family project for the long summer stretches, not ahead of you — especially if your vacation plans include spending time with relatives. And getting the kids involved can not only sharpen their research and interviewing skills, it can foster a genuine curiosity and interest in the stories of their own family.

The growth of the Internet has been largely responsible for the expansion in genealogy as a hobby, but it is not the only digital tool available to amateur researchers. There are now many software and services available to help you gather data as well as options for publishing the finished product.

Hunting and gathering

Howard Packard's Creative Projects Web site (www.hwp.ca, click on Home and Home Office, then Creative Projects in the lower right corner) includes a number of basic genealogy articles that can help you get started gathering data.

It suggests that you begin by collecting all of the basic information about close relatives — full names, dates and places of birth, marriages, deaths, and other major family events — then work back to the previous generation, and so on. In addition to official records, also pay attention to things like book inscriptions, gifts, and even furniture.

You can use a digital camera to "record" the tapestry and a scanner for the smaller, flat objects from photographs, to pieces of lace or chain, and peeling — and, of course, family photographs and documents. [If you don't have a scanner at home, go to a business service company like Kinkos, where you pay an hourly fee to use a computer and scanner.] These keepsakes and mementos can be used to add colour and interest to your finished product.

After interviewing relatives for your project, use a digital voice recorder or, even better, a digital video camera if your subjects are willing. And don't limit your questions to dates and facts; taking advantage of the technology to get your older relatives to tell you stories about their childhood or personal memories or events that shaped history. You may not have to even purchase a voice recorder if you already have a PDA or MP3 player; a voice note feature you can use it to record interviews in a digital audio format. If you have access to old video recordings or films, consider transferring those to a digital format. In the case of audio (depending on its age), you can probably do it yourself (see "SaveNow" for your "how-to" video in this issue), but you'll probably need to take film to a service bureau that specializes in film-to-video transfers.

Editing and publishing

The research and collection stage can be endless, so it's a good idea to set a goal for your project when you start — you can always add more information later.

Once [or when, as] you've collected your information and transferred it to your PC — by scanning, recording, or creating text or database files — make sure you back up your data up. Copy it to DVDs or CDs and keep a spare copy at a location other than your home. You might want to check out an online archive service like MemoryLane.com, which charges a one-off fee based on the amount of data stored. How you tame your mountain of information, however, will be

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Research resources

The Internet has been a boon to genealogists to the point that the challenge in finding your family roots today is no longer the lack of information, it's sifting through the now number 18 records and databases.

www.genealogy.gc.ca

A good online resource for Canadians is a site developed by the Canadian Heritage Ministry. The Canadian Genealogy Centre Web site provides links to a wide variety of historical records and documents, dating returns from as far back as 1851; military records, immigration statistics, western land grants, and records of Home Children. Though you can't actually search many of these records online, it tells you what records are available and how to consult them.

Recent updates to the site include a guide to researching Aboriginal ancestry and lists of Canadian newspaper subscriptions from 1915 to 1932.

[Roxie's note](http://www.genealogy.gc.ca)

www.rootsweb.com

This Web site is home to numerous interactive guides and research tools. Though it was developed by a U.S.-based company, MyFamily.com, it includes sections with extensive international resources. The WorldConnect Project, for example, contains more than 200 million ancestor names. RootsWeb is a collection of databases — official as well as those developed and submitted by other genealogy enthusiasts — that can be searched for free. RootsWeb success is based on user participation and there is no shortage of that. MyFamily.com says that the RootsWeb Genome List now contains more than a million surnames that have been submitted by more than 225,000 online genealogists. In addition to databases, visitors can link to genealogy meeting lists, message boards, and to Web sites of other amateur genealogists who've posted their family tree online.

—Roxie Johnson

based on how you plan to publish it.

Though much of the off-the-shelf genealogy software is not very helpful to Canadians for research purposes, these programs do include some great publishing templates and tools. Heritage Family Tree (US\$19.95, www.roxio.com), for example, includes a wide selection of tools for formatting information in print and online. Of particular interest is the PrintCollaboration feature, which lets more than one family researcher work on a project over the Internet.

Other genealogy software options include Family Tree Quick Fix (US\$19.95, www.infodivsoftware.com), Legacy Family Tree (US\$39.95, www.legacysoftware.com), and Roots Magic (US\$29.95 (free demo), www.rootsmagic.com). There are also several tools that weren't developed specifically for genealogists, but which can help you present your information in new and interesting ways.

One of these is Easy Media Creator 7 from Roxio (www.roxio.com). It is actually a suite of Roxio photo, audio, and video software — Easy CD & DVD Creator, PhotoAlbum, and VideoMovie 7 Pro (optional) — that allows you to import, edit, and combine files using a single interface. With it, you can create a slide show of family photographs and combine it with an audio track using voice recordings as well as favorite music. Or, import the digital images of your relatives with Capt. Aunt Helen talking about her first year as a school teacher, crop out the background, and overlay her "talking head" on a collage of pictures of her with her students. It's fairly simple to achieve a documentary-like result that truly adds life to your family history. The finished file can be optimized for emailing, viewing on the Web, or burned to CD or DVD. The software is \$39 and can be downloaded from Roxio's Web site.



If you like the idea of publishing your research results in a more standard fiction — you may have plans to give copies to your siblings and children, or to a number of relatives as a Christmas gift, for example — there are also a number of publishing options. The most basic

would be using your own printer, or having spiral-bound copies produced at a local service center like Kinkos or Staples. For a more professional result, however, consider print-on-demand services. Popular among self-published authors, these services are increasingly being used by amateur genealogists, according to a representative of Instabook Canada (www.instabook.ca).

Self-publishers provide the company with an electronic file of their finished book and cover design (usually in PDF format), as well as their choice of variables — page size, type of binding, choice of stock for covers, and more. They then print the requested number of copies and ship the copies to you. You can order reprints as required. Instabook's basic self-publishing package is \$249 for one proof and 10 copies of a book of up to 400 pages. At about \$1 per copy, it's being estimated if you plan to distribute that number of books. CafePress (www.cafepress.com) also offers print-on-demand books. There is no minimum number of books with this service; you pay a set page rate on top of a flat fee for each book you order — both rates vary depending on the type of binding selected. To set up your book, you have to create a CafePress account, which is actually an online store. From it, you or your relatives can order copies of your book and have them shipped directly to the desired recipient.

—Roxie Johnson

Press print

Printers and resources for creative projects

As early civilizations discovered many years ago, keeping young minds and hands active over the long summer break can be a challenge — hence the tie-dyed t-shirts, dreamcatchers, and other assumed crafts that come home with returning campers. Not only will crafts keep kids busy, they are a great way to encourage their creativity. Over the years, crafters have taken advantage of the home computer, incorporating that technology into their creative projects, especially those that involve photography. The inkjet printer is now an important tool in the creative hobbyist's arsenal.

Recently, we looked at some inkjet printers from Epson (www.epson.com) that are suitable for a range of projects. All of these are Mac and Windows compatible, and, in addition to dreams come with third-party software for both platforms.

Epson Stylus Photo R300

Suggested retail price: \$229

With the explosion of digital photography, more home printers have built-in slots for digital camera media. The Stylus Photo R300 is the newest such printer from Epson, with slots for CompactFlash, MemoryStick, SmartMedia, SecureDigital/MMC, and xD memory cards — which means you can print without connecting to a computer. The PC-free printing capability is further enhanced by the USB connector on the front of the printer, which allows you to connect directly to a digital camera or external drive (a USB key or Zip drive, for example). No special drivers are required, as long as the device functions as an external hard drive, the printer recognizes it. The R300 is a six-colour printer, and — like all of the Epson printers reviewed here — it has individual tanks for each colour. A nice touch, as you don't have to replace a cartridge just because you've run out of one colour.

The LCD menu system allows you to make an index print and select only the images you want to print (along with allowing you to select from an extensive list of finishing options for your paper type, size, page layout, and more), there's also a menu option to print only ones previously selected on the camera via DPOF. If you have a PictBridge-enabled camera, you can control printing options from the camera instead of the printer. You can also work with the R300 in a special CD/DVD print mode, plug a disc with a blank label into the carrier and each disc will alert you the front of the printer; and you can print directly onto your CDs.



Printer projects

If you have an inkjet printer, chances are it comes with software for creative projects: a basic image editor for tweaking photos before printing or templates for creating greeting cards and calendars. For example, if you subscribe to AOL, or are using for additional projects, there are similar resources available online for free. Just remember to stock up on ink and paper before you start.

EP Creative Projects page

www.epson.com/crafts/home/

The best of these free resources is from Hewlett-Packard Canada. From the home page, select Home and Hobby Crafts. Then click on the Creative Projects link in the bottom-right corner. The extensive list of projects and prints includes party kits for specific events or holidays, photo frames, signage for lemonade stands and garage sales, and even templates for fabric projects like throw Pillows.

Microsoft Home magazine

www.microsoft.com/magazine/home/

The Web site is home to how-to and product reviews for the home computer user. The how-to content includes articles with templates for various projects and crafts, such as making shadow puppets using an old (and bent) stick or customizing a barbecue spoon with image transfer paper. Though some projects suggest using specific Microsoft software (like Picture It!, they are basic enough that a similar program — in this case, another image editor — could easily be substituted).

Microsoft Graphics

www.microsoftgraphics.com/kids/

From the MS Kids page, click on Activities and Experiments for kid-oriented projects like colouring book pages, a book mark, history (painted bottle), and more. The "printable colouring pages" feature different wild animals in their environment. This section has links to e-postcards and articles on the same animals at MS Kids Magazine.

—Megan Johnson



Continued
on page D

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HUB Glossary PC terms

AGP Accelerated graphics port

A dedicated connector on a motherboard designed for high-performance graphics components. Standard on new machines. On older machines, it is the brown slot between white PCI slots and processor. AGP slots often feature a multiplier designation indicating how fast the card is in comparison to the original AGP specification. Newer cards are rated 4x or 8x.

BIOS onboard processor built

The heart of every computer and the component that does most of the computation. Major brands include Intel's Pentium line, which is the most popular, AMD's Athlon line, which also has a substantial following, Intel's Celeron line, which provides assisted-back performance at a scaled-back price, and Transmeta's Crusoe, which is a power-friendly processor offering modest performance.

BIG SRAM

A type of memory designed to provide twice the speed of older SDRAM. DDR, or Double Data Rate, memory may be rated by the speed of the computer bus in MHz (DDR200, DDR400, etc.) or by its theoretical bandwidth, in Gbytes/sec (PC2100, PC2700, etc.). Works only in memory slots designed for DDR and is incompatible with older SDRAM.

GB Gigabyte

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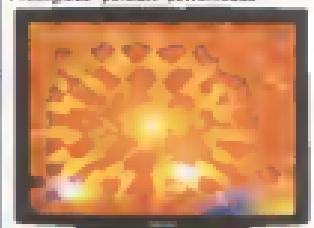


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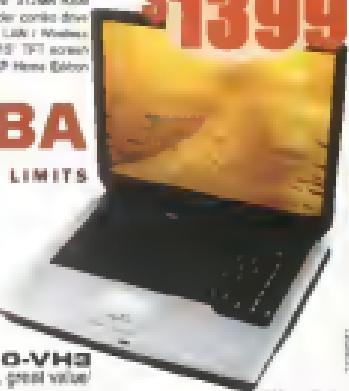


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RAM (random access memory)

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SRAM (Syncramous RAM)

A type of random access memory found in computer systems. SRAM is typically found in older systems (newer comput-

ers have moved to DDR memory, for the most part), and is rated by the speed of the memory on the motherboard, in MHz (PC100, PC133).

Serial ATA

Serial ATA is a style of hard drive connector that uses a serial connection rather than parallel, the type of connection a Plug and Play allows you to connect new drives while the computer is still running! and uses a very small flexible cable instead of the wider ribbon cable found on older hard drives.

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This can appear on your computer either as a discrete graphics card that can be replaced or as a component that is directly attached to the motherboard. The VGA connector is a 15-pin connector (also known as D-Sub), that is bright blue on most modern computers. This connector is used to hook up your monitor.

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Epson Stylus Photo RX600

Suggested retail price: \$499.

With the addition of a flatbed scanner, the Photo RX600 explores the creative possibilities of an image printer. Like the R300, it has a wide range of features for PC photo printing, slots for digital camera media, USB connection, LCD for previewing images and navigating print menus, and support for PictBridge-enabled cameras.

Some of the same features also allow for PC photo scanning of slides, photos, or documents, and for saving scanned images directly to memory cards or other backup devices (HD writers or portable hard drives, for example), connected to the RX600 via the USB port. The scanner offers 48-bit scanning (2.8GB of 300 dpi) for plenty of detail. And if you're scanning old photos that have faded, the included Easy Photo Fix software can help restore some of their original quality.

The printer portion of this all-in-one [it also functions as a colour photo copier] uses six inks: colours, adding light cyan and light magenta to the standard cyan, magenta, yellow and black inks [the same combination as the R300].

The RX600 is not only big in the options it offers to creative types, it's just plain big. However, if you don't already own a scanner, this all-in-one is definitely worth carving out a little desk space on your desktop.



Continued from page 12

Epson Stylus Photo 2200

Suggested retail price: \$999.

If you want to make standard-sized prints at home, most inkjet printers will do the job fairly well, but when you move into larger-sized prints (you may want to look at a higher-end printer like the Stylus Photo 2200) it's designed to handle prints of up to 13x20 inches using the included paper roll attachment, and 13x27 and 13x36 inches using its standard paper support. It can also output borderless prints in a variety of sizes, from dots up to 13 x 20 inches, so you don't have to get the cutters out. The seven-colour printer [it adds light black, as well as interchangeable photo and matte blacks] uses Epson's UltraChrome archival inks, so resulting prints should hold up well to ambient light — up to 300 years, according to Epson. This model is bound to be very appealing to photographers and anyone who loves the possibilities of printing on a larger canvas.

By Sean Corcoran and Megan Johnson

Crossword Factory 3
www.schoolhouse.com
Price: \$42.95 (download),
\$22.95 (boxed)



Three across, five down

For a student or teacher wanting the words education and fun may not be synonymous, but developer Schoolhouse Technologies has done a good job of trying to make them so with its line of wordsearch software.

Though the programs were designed as tools for teachers, they are available to the general public and do not require special systems or databases — just a PC running Windows 98SE or later or NT4 or later — and an image of text to print.

We looked at Crossword Factory 3, which, as the name suggests, allows you to generate crossword puzzles. The software was easy to install and quickly start generating custom puzzles.

Creating a crossword starts with selecting a word list. The software comes with several word lists with clues [and you can download even more at the company Web site] or you can add your own lists — names of local flora and fauna if you're spending the summer at the cottage, names of destinations on your summer road trip, characters and places in a favorite book, for example. You can edit your own clues or use the definitions included in the Crossword Factory 3

\$50.00 word加工厂 dictionary [which has both U.S. and U.K. spelling]. French, Spanish, and German dictionaries can also be downloaded from the Schoolhouse site, if you want to create puzzles for developing vocabularies in those languages.

The next step is clicking the **Create** button, which automatically lays out the words in a puzzle format with the clues on the lower part of the page. If you aren't happy with the results, click **Change grid** — and again, if desired — and it will create a different layout, the intention is quite flexible, allowing you to adjust the size of individual squares or more than one puzzle at a time. The puzzle elements are also for customization if you don't like the default look of the page: change or reduce borders and margins; add images or special characters; change the font, size, color of fonts, and change the size of the crossword squares. Last step, click **Print**, and print as many copies as you need.

Schoolhouse Technologies makes a whole series of similar programs: word search programs, including Schoolhouse Bingo, Map Workbook Planning, and Mathematics Workbook Factory. Download and *zipped* versions can be downloaded at the Schoolhouse Web site.

—Megan Johnson

Digital Photography Tutorial 6

Working with an image editor 2: Colour by the numbers

The images created by most digital cameras use RGB colour mode, which is an additive colour model. This means various combinations of red, green and blue light combine to form all of the colours that a digital camera is capable of recording. These are defined in 256 possible values. For each colour – at least 8 bits wide. If a pixel has a value of 0 for red, green, and blue, it will be black. Likewise, if the values are all at 255, it will be pure white. In fact, digital values for red, green, and blue, whatever they may be, create neutral grey. The bigger those decimal numbers the lighter the grey. Middle grey is 128 (128 128 128).

Hues are created in an RGB image when the red, green, and blue values of a pixel are not the same. If you have image editing software installed on your PC, you can see this for yourself by opening an image and passing the cursor or eyedropper tool over it. There should be a monitor somewhere [in Photoshop it's in Info, while Paint Shop Pro's eyedropper has a small pop-up that gives three values]. Here are a few of the many relationships you can easily observe. Dark areas have small values while light areas have big values. Big differences in the red, green, and blue values create more colour while small differences in the RGB values will indicate less. Equal values for red and the absence of the third green part colour – for example, 128 128 128 is yellow.

In the accompanying photo of the bird of paradise, the darker parts of the orange petals read 1255 1143 80 while the lighter parts are 1216 1399 80. The darkest greens on the base read 192 620 80.

Two areas that interested me most were the switch up on the blue tongue (1255 6261 8708) and the dark background, the lighter part of which read 192 664 888. Knowing these values, I could immediately do two things to improve this photo. Since the dark background and the white tip of the blue tongue contain no image detail worth preserving, why not set them to black (0 0 0) and white (1255 1255 1255)? Not surprisingly, this is known as setting the black and white points,

and doing this allows the remaining values to expand the available tonalities.

Using the values above for setting the black and white points was, for example only. In most cases at values of around 20, you can still see dark detail that you might want to keep, and setting the black point with such a relatively high value would render all those subtle details to black.

In that particular photo, however, I wanted the background to be pure black. I was in a botanical garden, and placed the nearest thing of hand, my black fleecy vest, behind the flower as a back drop to accomplish that. But my exposure was off so some of the areas of the vest came out dark grey. Picking the lighter of the greys as the black point rendered the entire background black, which is exactly what I wanted. There's no better highlight in this image than setting the white point, yet it made much of a difference. After the adjustment, the colours became more vibrant and seemed to pop out, while the overall image had more contrast. And just passing prints made from the two images, the corrected one has a strong three-dimensional character to it that the uncorrected one lacks.

I made the above correction in Photoshop using the Levels tool, but most image editors have a similar tool that will allow you to accomplish the same thing. Along with setting the black and white points of your image, the Levels tool lets you set the mid-point. If you were to count the number of pixels in your image that had each of the 256 values and plotted them on a graph you'd have a histogram of your image. This is what you see when you open the Levels tool, along with a white, grey, and black sliders at the bottom of the graph. Moving the grey slider to the right tells the image editor that the values under the grey slider – for instance, 250 – should become 128, which has the effect of darkening the whole image. Similarly, moving the grey pointer to the left tells the image editor that the darker values under the grey slider should be 128, which brightens the image.



Before



After

By David Isaacs

Long-term memory

If you're about to get a new digital camera, here's a not-so-well-kept secret: the memory cards that come with new digital cameras — if a card is included at all, that is — are generally low capacity and are only designed to get you started. If you're choosing at the highest resolution your camera allows, you may only be able to take a handful of shots before you have to run back to your computer to unload them. Whether or not your camera comes with a card, you should seriously consider getting one; a few extra dollars for a higher capacity card, if only for the convenience.

When purchasing a new memory card, it's important to remember that not all memory cards are equal speed-wise. Data cards are often slower, whether you're going Category Flash, SecureDigital, Memory Stick, or another type.

If you're planning to buy a high-resolution digital camera, you'll want to make sure you have a card that can move data quickly enough to avoid long wait times between capturing images. Some manufacturers will list the speed rating as a multiple (40, 120 etc.), while others will list broad names that took note improved performance (for example, Ultra Extreme, Pro, or Elite).

When in doubt, talk with one of the staff at your local digital camera store; they'll be the best ones to tell you the main types of memory currently available.

CompactFlash

The older incarnation of the memory technologies still in widespread use, CompactFlash (CF) is physically the largest of the formats, but also offers the highest capacity cards, at 4 GB and counting. CF tends to be a bit more rugged than the alternatives and, though it's disappearing in many entry-level cameras in favour of SecureDigital, CF is still popular in cameras slotted to the pros. The CF card has a mechanical drive that offers up to 4 GB of storage space in a Type II CF format, which is slightly thicker than standard Type I CF.

Memory Stick

Favoured by Sony and compatible mostly with Sony and Samsung products, the Memory Stick (MS) is roughly the size and shape of a stack of gels, but it has far more storage capacity, up to 1 GB using the MS Pro format. For smaller drives, there's the compact Memory Stick Duo (or users up to 128 MB), which comes with loose adapters for use in full-size Memory Stick slots.

SecureDigital

The bright new light in the world of digital cameras media, SecureDigital (SD) and its older unencrypted sibling, MultiMediaCard (MMC) offers a smaller form factor with a lock slot, allowing you to have smaller devices and write

protected cards. Cards currently top out at 128 MB, but 1 GB and higher capacity cards are on the roadmap for the near future.

a)

Using the FujiFilm and Olympus xD is the smallest of the digital camera memory types — barely larger than a thumbnail — but it can hold up to 512 MB of data. The big downside is that it's so small it can be hard to manipulate with your fingers, particularly in a hand, and it is easier to misplace than other types of memory.

By Sean Coughlin

Select a disk for your memory needs
www.sandisk.com
www.lumix.com
www.leica.com
www.canonstyle.ca
www.olympus.com
www.fujifilm.ca



When speed counts

Most memory isn't the same. Not only do you have different capacities and different performance levels, there are also two different types of technologies inside those little plastic shells. Much of the flash memory available right now uses multi-level cell technology, which stores space efficiently but isn't quite as fast as single-level cell technology.

We put our hands on a few samples of single-cell SecureDigital memory from ADP Electronics Inc. (www.adp.com) and ran a few speed tests using a USB card reader. The card holds 512 MB of data — 20 picture files at roughly 1.2 MB each — which was copied to various SD cards to compare speeds.

As it turns out, the ADP card were noticeably faster than the high-performance cards from the competition: the 250-MB ADP card versus the 100 in 6.5 seconds, while it takes the standard SanDisk card 32 seconds and the SanDisk Extreme card 11 seconds. Kingston's Data Pro card versus the 17.5 seconds.

All of these are pretty impressive numbers for removable media, but photographers who want to get data onto the card as quickly as possible will probably appreciate the slight edge of the single-cell cards, despite their smaller capacity.

Salvation for your stax o' wax

"Take this off time rock 'n roll," wails Bob Seger if that's you too, but your truly great stuff languishes on stacks of scratchy vinyl or worn-out cassettes, think audio restoration. Bad noise has different characteristics than good sound, and audio restoration software separates the two by filtering certain patterns or frequencies in certain ways.

To prepare this article, we selected three audio restoration products: Clean Plus 4.0, Diamond Cut DCS, and Diamond Cut Pro.

Clean was developed by Steinberg, but is now sold by Pinnacle Systems. It comes with Steinberg WaveLab Lite and a USB-powered pre-amplifier that you might need if you are using a phone turntable. Both Diamond XP Pro and Diamond Cut DCS are available for download from their respective developers.

Audio restoration is full of technical terms describing the characteristic states of audio. To get the most of these programs requires some understanding of them. Clean easily does the least job of cleaning the noise from the signal. It uses an attractively styled interface full of 3D scripted buttons and sliders. DCS and Diamond Cut Pro have a lot more controls and offer a lot more power. DCS uses the same single interface panel for many of its filters and includes an extensive list of presets that can be highly specific, "early shelter" filters, for example. Of the three, Diamond Cut Pro is the easiest friendly to novices, although anyone familiar with audio technology terminology (e.g., high-pass, notch, FFT) will be no stranger ground.

The magic of restoration

In cleaning up music from vinyl LPs, CDs, or more ancient Tapes, restoration software uses a number of filters for specific kinds of problems. An impulse noise filter takes out clicks, pops and snaps; a crackle filter (also called a median filter) removes that annoying back ground noise; a hum filter removes bass; a rumble filter takes out low frequency noise introduced by the mechanical operation of the

turntable; and a hum filter removes the 60 Hz hum introduced by household electrical currents. Restoring music from tape is somewhat simpler mainly involving the noise and hum filters.

All three programs include controls that attack these problems singly or in combination. One of the most useful tools for cleaning up albums that are noisy from wear but otherwise relatively free from damage is the continuous noise filter. The software samples a portion that is "silent" — at the beginning of the album or between tracks, for example — then uses that noise print as a filter.

Diamond Cut XP requires Diamond Cut DCS since you use a noise print within the main workspace, then preview and modify the filter interactively before applying it. This feature is very useful because the noise print filter can be so aggressive and remove some of the good audio. Clean offers a set of presets, but also allows you to make your own although you need to use WaveLab Lite and you can't modify interactively.

The three packages also include other tools that allow you to rebalance left and right stereo signals, equalize frequencies, change the duration of a song without altering the pitch, and add reverb or other special effects. Reverb is a bit of reverberation that, for example, can enliven an otherwise dull track.

To restore a typical collection of vinyl albums in reasonable shape, any of these will do a good job. Clean Plus's lower price, plus the inclusion of a preamp, make it a good value. For heavy-duty restoration work (case test discs were worn and noisy 78s from the 1940s), I loaded myself using DCS since that the rest.

By David Rensin

*Converted from US\$79, US\$199 and US\$199, respectively.

Analogue to digital

There's more to digitizing analogue music than simply popping in a CD and hitting the track. For one thing, it's a multi-step process — it takes an hour to record an hour. And, of course, you need the appropriate turntable or tape player. You can generally connect a tape player's tape-out jacks directly to your computer sound card's line-in jack using the appropriate Y-cable. With most component turntables, however, you'll need to go through an intermediate device called a pre-amplifier to avoid distortion.



Clean Plus Pro from Pinnacle Systems, www.pinnaclesys.com. Estimated price: \$199*



Diamond Cut XP Pro from Diamond Inc., www.diamondinc.com. Estimated price: \$279**



Diamond Cut DC Pro from Enhanced Audio, www.enhancedaudio.com. Estimated price: \$119*

Burning issue

Rise of recordable CDs and DVDs makes for another recycling dilemma

There was a time when data was the computer's ultimate renewable consumable. Whether you used 3.5-inch or 5.25-inch floppy disks (or if you're really old enough, 8-inch floppies), the problem was the same: whenever you needed more room, you just deleted something to make space. Making use of what you had become an art. (Hong Kong Apple II and Commodore 64 users: remember punching holes in their 5.25-inch floppies to take advantage of the unused flip side? And before AOL software was distributed on CD, I'm sure millions of computer users were thankful for those prima floppers — it was like getting free office supplies in the mail.)

Then came the CD, and suddenly existing discs went out of style. Since you can't reuse CD-RW or CD-R discs, the days of erasing your obsolete data to make room for a quick backup are pretty much gone.

This leaves us with one problem, but two. Fewer of us are using floppy disks, but many of us have minor warehouses full of them from computing years past. (Reusing in our closets? At the same time, we're racking up CDs at a ridiculous pace. Consider the case of John Lescron and Jim McTavish, of El Dorado, Calif., who have been collecting unscratched AOL CDs as part of a protest. In just 15 months, they'd amassed over 260,000 — enough, if stacked, to just about reach the top of the GM Tower. And that doesn't include the millions of CDs, AOL or otherwise, that get thrown out when they're no longer useful.)

Getting floppies out of the house is just a matter of finding someone who will wants them — which, surprisingly, isn't as hard as it sounds. Schools, non-profits, charities, and even my co-workers still have plenty of uses for them, provided you've kept them in good shape (giving each one a disk with a label you've written over several times is like donating an infidelity stamp sheet to the Salvation Army).

By their nature, write-once CDs and DVDs are a bigger problem than floppies. You can't really pass them along because they can't be reused, but most recycling facilities won't take them, despite the reusable plastic and metals the discs are made of — they're simply too difficult to take apart compared to say, a plastic milk jug.

I spent a considerable amount of time trying to find a Canadian company that would recycle CDs and DVDs from individuals, so I could. In the U.S., however, there's GreenDisk (www.greendisk.com, which also reclaim floppies), a Washington State-based company that serves individuals as well as corporations. The procedure is pretty simple: pack up your discs, download the recycling submission form online form, pay a nominal fee (\$10.00 per pound with a minimum charge of \$18.71), and mail them off.

When I spoke to GreenDisk founder David Bechtel, he explained that the CDs they reclaim are physically shredded then consolidated into a massive Gaylord container. These containers are then transported, 40 at a time, to a plastics processor where the material is used in among other things, a compounding agent for automotive and appliance parts.

In year—remember the stack of CDs I mentioned earlier? Just one of these Gaylord containers holds more than four times as many. "We handled 10 million AOL discs alone in one year," Bechtel said.

By Dennis Townsend

*Converted from US\$10.15, US\$2, and US\$40, respectively.

Eternal sunshine of the spotless disc

Before getting rid of your media, the usual rules apply: make sure they're unreadable or secure (by "unreadable," under no circumstances should they contain any personal or sensitive information). Floppy disks are easy to deal with: there are many "data shredder" programs on the market that will completely destroy your data, or you can get your hands on a degausser (otherwise known as a disk wiper). In a pinch, you can even use a speaker magnet.

Of course, there is no software solution for CDs and DVDs, and they need a magnet. That leaves hardware: like Alaris' CD/DVD Shredder (www.alaris.com). The little black box — only slightly larger and thicker than a standard small office paper shredder — doesn't actually melt CDs to tiny bits; rather, it puts thousands of tiny metal shavings on both sides of the disc you slide through it, rendering it unreadable. The whole process takes about two seconds. Price of entry is fairly affordable too: you can get it through mail-order or the Web for as little as \$60.*

*Converted from US\$65



A family affair

Shared wireless plans help parents stay in touch with kids and keep a lid on costs

These days, you don't have to go far to see a teen slinging an iPhone or smartphone. No considering that a buyer generally needs to be 18 to sign a co-signer (and have a credit rating below), you might have wondered, where are all these phones coming from? For some teens, the answer lies in the new family cellular packages that are becoming common offerings from the major cellular service providers.

Besides offering parents a way to appease nagging cellphone less-seems, the plans can generate a more economical and streamlined way for the whole family to keep in touch, with benefits like unlimited calling between family members and a single inbox.

Though they might be the first group to spring to mind, teens and their parents are not the only demographic using family plans. They are also popular between spouses, siblings, and parents with younger children. Some service providers allow the family to be defined over a wide geographical area as well. In fact, in the example, family members can be anywhere in the province.

From shopping trips in fieldtrips, the convenience of being able to call and say "I need just what we need from the produce aisle" and the security of being able to say "I got to uncompromised safety," are both compelling reasons for parents to jump on the family plan bandwagon. Tessa Suzanne McManus, manager of communications at Rogers Wireless, "When more than one person in a household needs a phone, it is ideal."

Where did the concept of family plans come from? You might say it grew with the industry itself, according to Telus Mobility spokesperson Julia Querton. "The line of who uses cellular is never evolving. There used to be a time when it was geared to the white-collar professional. That's no longer the case. People from every social and economic and age demographic are using cellphones. So we need to have plans that reflect that."

However, it's likely that the teenage parented-for bed-cellphone habits was also a factor in the growing popularity of these services. Parents want their kids to keep in touch but, as Querton puts it, they "don't want the kids to have carte blanche." Family chargers are locked on a single invoice, but they are broken down by cellphones so everyone can see who is hogging the minutes... or racking up roaming expenses righteously.

While family plans appear to be marketed to parents, a great deal of cellphone accessory sellers target teens directly. MuchMusic and CTV Television interactives' new online store (shopablemuchmusic.com), which encourages visitors to "lock out your phone with the first few sounds around,"

is frequently updated with new ringtones and screen savers for Bell Mobility, Rogers AT&T Wireless, and Telus Mobility subscribers. As American Idol addicts will swear, and messaging for interactive television, or just as a way to keep in touch, is also becoming widespread.

Although statistics on the Canadian wireless industry tend not to be broken down by demography, visible marketing towards younger users suggest that they are a significant force in the purchasing of wireless products.

"Youths are traditionally early adopters of new technology," says Marc Chernin, director of communications for the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Council Association (CWTA), adding that there are 13.5 million wireless subscribers in Canada, or 45 percent of the population. For families where one youth is among those early adopters, family plans with all-in-one invoices provide a means of monitoring teenage enthusiasm for cellphones while still ensuring that loved ones are only a phone call away.

By Sue Rowson

The deal:

While there are some differences between major companies, most family-rate plans operate by allowing multiple family members (usually up to five) to share a "bucket" of minutes. Packages can also include unlimited local calls between phones on the plan, a phone for each member, separate phone numbers, and roaming. Here are some other things to keep in mind when looking for a family plan:

- Sometimes so-called "unlimited" calling between phones has an actual cap, so make sure you ask.
- Family packages typically include a number of "free" phones, but this is often limited to two, with more phones usually available at a discount.
- Ask about other perks, including conference calling, pet racing, and free calls on birthdays.

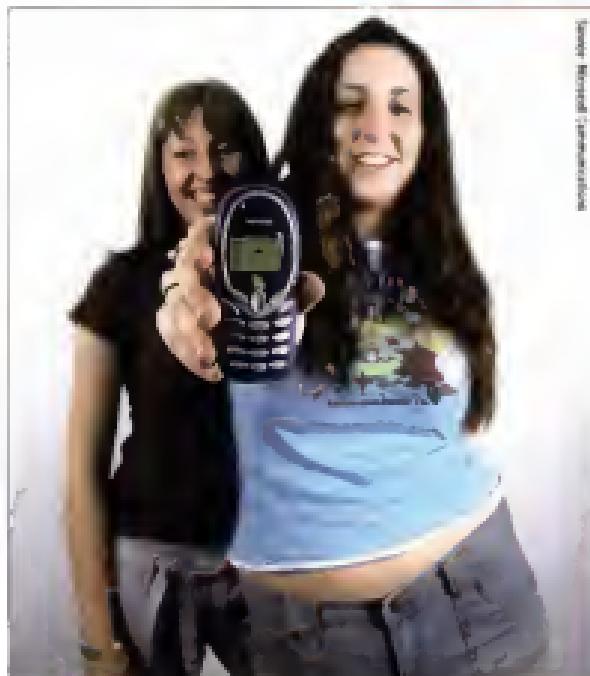


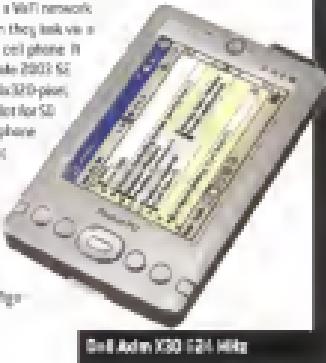
Photo: iStockphoto.com

With all of the buzz about LCD and DLP this year, you may have forgotten about plasma, the technology that first made flat-screen TV sets a reality. Well, Viewsonic [www.viewsonic.com] has it together, and has continued to add to its plasma lineup, the latest model of which is the VPW4255. The 42-inch display with 1,024x1,024 native resolution supports all data sources and video formats, according to Viewsonic, including HDTV Enhanced Definition Television, and standard television. It also features multiple inputs, including composite, component, S-video, analogue RGB, and DVI/HDMI. There can also alternate audio choices, view and contrast ratios, picture-in-picture, split screen, or full-screen modes for viewing data, video, and TV signals. Viewsonic says it has also incorporated improvements in brightness, sharpness, and contrast with the new model. The VPW4255 will be available in July for suggested retail price of \$2,999.



ViewSonic VPW4255

The PDAs/reviewed last month are a great solution for those who need to access email on the go, but with prices starting in the \$200 range, they aren't an option for many budgets. Enter Asmz [www.asmz.us] with its X30 line, the top configuration of which runs a 624 MHz Intel processor and comes with built-in 802.11b and Bluetooth wireless connectivity. The former allows users to connect to the internet when they're in range of a WiFi network, and the latter when they take via a Bluetooth-enabled cell phone. It runs Windows Mobile 2003 SE, and features a 240x320-pixel, 3.5-inch display, slot for SD media cards, headphones jack, voice-to-text, and comes with a sync/charge cradle with a slot for charging a spare battery (optional). This Asmz X30 configuration is \$449.



Asmz X30 624 MHz



One of the downsides of going at acquisition can be the parallel acquisition of a different type of flash memory card for each device: xD for your camera, SD for your PDA, and Memory Stick for your DV camera, for example. The real challenge comes when you want to transfer data from these devices to your PC. SanDisk [www.sandisk.com] has determined that problem with its 5-in-1 PC Card Adapter, which works SD, MMC, Memory Stick, Memory Stick PRO, xD-Picture Card, and SmartMedia. The card's slide slot is slot in the adapter, which then slides into the laptop computer's PC

5-in-1 PC Card Adapter

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JUNE PHOTO SPREE WINNER

THE WINNER:

Congratulations to Al Pepli of Elbert, Alberta whose photo "Smiling the Best" won the "smiles" challenge in our bi-monthly Photo Spree contest.

Al used a Canon Digital Rebel (1/300th at f5.6, 100 ISO) to capture the image that's draped and infected towels on Robie's Patio Deck, Cal. For his efforts, Al won a Lexmark 82250 All-in-one photo-quality printer, scanner and color copier.



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HUB's Photo Spree contest form. All submissions must contain this information. Send to contest@hubconnect.com.

Deadline: August 13th, 2004

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone Number: _____

THE RULES: You must use a digital camera to capture the subject. Works can be submitted via email (contest@hubconnect.com). Accompanying your photo should be the name and model of the camera you used, the names of any software programs used to modify the image and, if possible, the shutter and aperture speed you used to take the photo.

Submit your photographs, along with the information from the form below by August 13th, 2004. You can submit up to three photographs, all of which must be accompanied by submission form. Submissions will be selected on a case-by-case basis. Files should be no larger than 500 KB and no smaller than 200 KB. No photo per entry.

Contest Rules: Prints must be received by September 10th, 2004. Winners must provide valid identification upon claiming prize. The prize awarded is non-transferable and cannot be redeemed for cash. To enter and to be eligible to win, persons must be residents of Canada and not employees or be associated with an employee of Media Publishing, its affiliate companies, or advertising or promotional agencies. The winners will be announced by HUB on August 13th, 2004 from among all eligible entries received or before October 31st. All winners will be contacted by telephone or email. In the event that they cannot be contacted within ten days of following the winner notification process will be initiated. All entries become the property of HUB and may be used in subsequent publications for this contest. All submissions are subject to editing by their author and must be original work.

Age: _____

Occupation/School: _____

Title of Entry: _____

Camera Used: _____

Software Used: _____

A long time ago in a galaxy not too far away, studios realized that movie merchandise is a good way to squeeze every last possible dollar from a popular film.

It wasn't long before videogames became as common as the respective t-shirts, action figures, lunch boxes, and fast food premiums for the same movies. As a general rule, games based on popular movie licenses have relied too much on audience marketing: pairing a game with an inferior product and expecting them to buy it anyway.

While good movies and bad games are no longer mutually exclusive, gamers should still approach with caution.

Publisher: Vivendi Universal Games | **Developer:** Saffire Studios | **Price:** \$39.99 | **ESRB:** Teen | **Platform:** Xbox, PS2

Van Helsing

Van Helsing puts gamers in control of the movie's namesake as they take him through his quest to vanquish Count Dracula and unlock the secrets of his past. High production values, some nice side missions and a few interesting puzzle elements suggest that Saffire Studios was aiming to make the game more than the sum of its license. The missions on the whole are pretty linear and a complete red herring with all manner of otherworldly creatures like gorgogons and the usual walking shadows, along with some simple puzzle challenges. A functional fighting system, melee and ranged weapons, upgradeable abilities and the fact that certain creatures are immune to certain damage attacks serve to push Van Helsing just over the cusp from mediocre. button masher to hectic combat game. Dark brother (against the likes of Mr. Hyde and Frankenstein) add some interest to the combat.



Publisher: Vivendi Universal Games | **Developer:** Barkerverse Studios | **Price:** \$39.99 | **ESRB:** Mature | **Platform:** Xbox

Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay

Chronicles of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay is a copy in videotape-based on a movie license, rather than relaunch the events of the film. Escape From Butcher Bay is a prequel to Chronicles of Riddick, the movie and a really good game to boot.



Part well-timed shooter part first person action adventure game, Butcher Bay's main character Riddick is voiced by the star of the film, Vin Diesel, in generally good result.

Gamers start the game [following some lengthy cut scene intro] after being transported to the maximum security Butcher Bay prison, set in a gritty dystopian future.

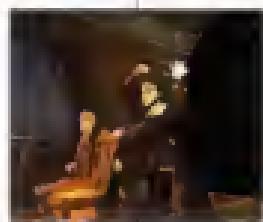
In a run tact to standard FPS gaming, players can't just kill a guard then pick up the gun and start laying waste. Guns are coded such that only those in the prison database of guards can wield them. It's a little frustrating at times but largely Butcher Bay from being just another in the long line of gory bullet symphonies and reinforces the fact that gamers have to use stealth in some places as opposed to brute force and brawn.

Butcher Bay takes gamers through gritty environments and drops them into some interesting scenarios. For example, part way through the game, players are dumped into a general population of a prison camp, running comp. With all talk being confiscated, players have to climb through the criminal ranks, performing hits, running errands, picking fights, and bartering for goods [like the most popular prison shiv] in order to progress.

Publisher: Electronic Arts | **Developer:** Electronic Arts UK | **Price:** \$39.99 | **ESRB:** Everyone | **Platform:** Xbox, PS2, GameCube, PC

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban

J.K. Rowling has captivated children and adults alike the world over with her fantastical stories of a young and gifted wizard named Harry Potter. Unfortunately, readers and moviegoers stand to be disappointed with Harry et al's most recent gamergazing.



Prisoner of Azkaban, in attempting to translate some of the events from the movies, comes up short, rather than take some creative license, the game sticks players into a well produced but somewhat lifeless retelling of the events of the film.

Gamers complete wizard item gathering, object finding, and simple puzzle solving missions in their travels through Harry's world. There is some interest to be found in the form of magic duels and riding magical creatures, but unfortunately, not enough.

By Andrew House, Critique

Old-school console gaming

without the console

Yeah, yeah, your PlayStation, XBoxes, and Game Cubes are fun and all, but there's just something about the old-school arcade games that never really grows old. In the early days of arcade-style videogames, the concepts were pretty simple, usually no more than move and shoot. The graphics were nothing to write home about either, featuring somewhat blocky blobs of colour moving around the screen. But the games were still a lot of fun, probably because of the simplicity, rather than despite it. After all, the first home gaming consoles were sometimes even crude, but were fun too.

Despite the proliferation of high-end consoles featuring complex and well-rendered games that draw players into the 3D action, Juke Pacific (www.juicepac.com) is leaving much software for the classics. Rather than destroying the old games for play on a new gaming console, Juke Pacific has packaged them up into looking joystick units, powered by AAA batteries and plug directly into your TV. No console required — just plug and play!

The Juke joystick is almost identical to the squared-off joysticks that come with the original consoles. Once you plug it into your television (using the composite video and mono audio ports that come right out of the back of the joystick), you can select one of 20 classic games, including Adventure, Asteroids, Breakout, Centipede, Cirqus Atari, Gravitar, Missile Command, Pong, RealSports Volleyball, and Taito Beatmania. Each game uses exactly the same data as the original, so you swear that

you're actually playing on an Atari 2600 console. It has an estimated retail price of \$29.

While the Atari 2600 was a thing of joy for many gamers, a certain segment of players insist that Activision games for the 2600 were the superior choice. The Activision controller also has a classic design (it rounded joysticks with the fire button on top). Inside are Activision, Bemani, Crackpot, Freeway, Grand Prix, Ice Hockey, Pitfall!, River Raid, Spider Fighter and Tempest. That one will cost about \$33.

My favorite, for a few reasons, is the Namco joystick. It has a classic, dimpled-style joystick with the initial roll tipped by the colorful plastic ball, and though it only comes with five games, they are all sellers: Super Mario, Big Oug, Galaxian, Pac-Man, and Baby R. Each game comes straight from the arcade library, which means you are truly playing Pac-Man on your television, rather than one of the many cheap imitations that have appeared on various consoles over the years. Again, the Namco joystick will run about \$33.

All of these controllers (as well as a special Superhero Spaceman's game for the last) are available now. Keep your eye open for summer for a new group: Spiderman (five games), Arcade Pinball (thirteen games), and Ms. Pac-Man (with four addition of Namco games). Also, keep an eye on the Web Public, which will feature 10 games that work best with a paddle-style controller.

By Sean Cornethers

*Converted from US\$20 (Atari), US\$25 (Activision, Namco).



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